

# IN THE BEGINNING



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Woodson County Historical Society  
Yates Center, Kansas  
Vol. 6 - No. 21

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Lester A. Harding - Editor

### EDITOR'S NOTES —

The red box and mark has brought quite a few paid up subscriptions, but there are many who have not responded. So if a red mark is in a box above you will know your subscription has not been paid.

In spite of our precautions mistakes seem to creep in each issue. However none have been serious. We would like to thank our many readers for their responses and encouragement in regard to this publication. It all helps in our task in getting it out and we certainly appreciate their comments.



Yates Center High School Football Team, 1900. We have not learned just who all in this picture are, but will mention those we do know. In the bottom row with the football over his shoulder is Scott Spencer. On the end of that row is Jack Solander. Back of him is Warren "Joe" Millson. On the back row and fourth from the left is Frank Woodruff.

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Yates Center, Kansas

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## WOODSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Organized March, 1965

The September meeting of the Historical Society was a dinner meeting on Tuesday evening, September 26, in the dining room of the Woodson Hotel. J.C. Schnell presented the program by reminiscing about early days in Yates Center.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Woodson County Historical Museum closed for the season on Sunday, October 22, 1972. During the five months that it was open there were 1200 persons signed the register. People from 30 states and 60 different towns in Kansas registered. People from four other countries — West Germany, Italy, England and British Columbia, Canada, also signed the register.

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The total membership for the Woodson County Historical Society during 1972 was 234. However, there was the loss of eight members by death through the year. These have all been listed on this page of different issues.

\* \* \* \* \*

We would like very much to see this membership go above the 250 mark in 1973. We hear people say that they do not join the Historical Society because they will not be able to attend any of the meetings. But we would like to say that a paid up membership in the Historical Society shows that they are interested in what the Society stands for and also that paid up memberships are a real boost to the moral of those trying to keep the Society alive and growing. Every one seems to be proud of our Museum.

\* \* \* \* \*

### IN MEMORIAN

Nelson Toedman

70

July 17, 1972

Mr. Toedman was born in the county and lived his entire life on the farm where he was born. He had a Life Membership in the Woodson County Historical Society.

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IN THE BEGINNING is the voice of the Woodson County Historical Society. Both of these are boosters of Woodson County. One for the preservation of the past in written form and the other for preservation of the way of life of the county, especially in the Woodson County Museum.

A membership to the one and a subscription to the other is a boost also for the entire county.

Join and Support The

Woodson County Historical Society

Life Membership \$25.00

Regular Membership \$2.00

## THE J.W. DEPEW FAMILY —

One of the first of the general merchants in the new town of Yates Center in 1876, and one of the early day treasurers of Woodson County was J.W. Depew.

John Walter Depew was born at Bloomington, Illinois. Here he grew up and attended the school at that place. As he grew up he worked as a clerk in a merchantile business for four years.

In 1868 at the age of 20 years, he came to LeRoy. Here he was met by relatives, Charles B. and Frank Butler. He attended high school at LeRoy and also worked as a clerk in the toy department of Butler Bros. Store. Charles Butler had married Ann Depew, and he and his wife had lived in the same house as J.W. or as he was better known as Walter Depew. The Butler brothers, Charles and Frank, had came to LeRoy the previous year.

The Butlers also dealt in the cattle business and in 1872, they moved to Woodson County where they had purchased land that became the Butler Ranch, about three miles to the northwest of the present Yates Center. Owl Creek ran through near the ranch headquarters. Walter Depew came with them and became the bookkeeper at the ranch.

While still working at the Butler Ranch, J.W. Depew was married to Miss Evaline Cox. They were married at the home of the bride's parents in Burlington. This occasion was on September 29, 1875.

(When she was 78 years old Mrs. Depew wrote quite a detailed historical account of her life. This include the story of her folks, the Cox's, The Butlers, Charles and Frank, who were also her uncles. As her married life was all in the town of Yates Center, from the starting of the town there are many interesting tales of the town. We had intended to use this historical article in this issue with the Depew story, but decided that it was too lengthy for the time we had allotted, so some of it will be used in a later issue of IN THE BEGINNING. We will use a part of it here.)

On the day following their marriage, Walter and Eva Depew started on their wedding trip. With a spirited team hitched to a top buggy they drove to Neosho Falls, where they stayed for three days, attending the Woodson County Fair in Riverside Park. They came to the Butler Ranch which was their home for a while after the marriage.

About this time, or in the early summer of 1875, a hill partly covered by blackjack oak and prairie grass, called Centre, received the most votes for county seat of Woodson County. This election was in August, 1875, but it took another election in September, 1876, before the new town was officially declared the county seat.

Getting their mail the first years of their marriage was more than just a walk to the mailbox. Walter would go once a week to Kalida, a distance of about four miles across country. His route to Kalida took him through what was later the public square of Yates Center.

Thomas W. Wilson, a merchant in the town of Kalida, moved with the county seat of Woodson County, bringing the second to Yates Center. He operated this store until June, 1876, when he became the first postmaster of Yates Center. Mr. Wilson then sold his stock of merchandise to Walter Depew.

Mr. Depew going to the town of Defiance, which was the last county seat. Here he purchased an abandoned building that was made ready to move to Yates Center. Being too long to move easily the building was sawed in two sections. Each of these sections was skidded across Owl Creek, and then hauled by teams to a lot on the west side of the square that was purchased from Levi Robbins. It was a two story building and was put about in the center of the block. The upstairs commonly referred to as the hall was used for many of the towns social affairs—dances, basket suppers, festivals, which gave away to religious and political meetings. Day school and Sunday School was first held in this hall until the one room, stone school house was built.

On October, 31, 1876, the first child was born to Mr. and Mrs. Depew. It was a tiny baby girl who was named Burtha. However her life on earth was very short. She was buried beneath a pine tree in a corner of the lot where they lived. She was buried in a home-made walnut casket made by H.T. Chellis. About eight years later when the Yates Center cemetery was started the little casket was transferred to the present family plot.

In September, 1877, a son was born to the Depews and was given the name of Leonidas, but was known mostly in later years as Lon J. Depew. Lon was the third boy born in the town of Yates Center. Two years later another son, William H. was born. Their third son was Benjamin and two daughters, Pearl and Gwendolin.

The Depews operated the general store on the west side from 1876 until 1880, when he sold out to Palmer and Jewett as he had been elected as county treasurer of Woodson County in the November, 1879 election.

What was perhaps the first telephone communication in Yates Center was the home-made outfit that was a wire and two sounders connecting the Depew home with the treasurers office in the courthouse. To call a person to the telephone rapping on the center of the square box was resorted to. No receiver was needed as the sounders did double duty as transmitter and receiver.

\* \* \* \* \*



Picture of John Walter and Evaline Sylvia Depew. Evidently taken about the time they moved into Yates Center.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lon J. Depew was married to May Greenman. On January 20, 1905. They lived to observe their 63rd wedding anniversary. They had one son Martin Depew.

William Depew married Pearl Schaefer. They had one son, Earl Depew.

Pearl Depew was married to Shirley Busby.

Ben Depew married Helene Westerfield. They have two sons Robert and Walter.

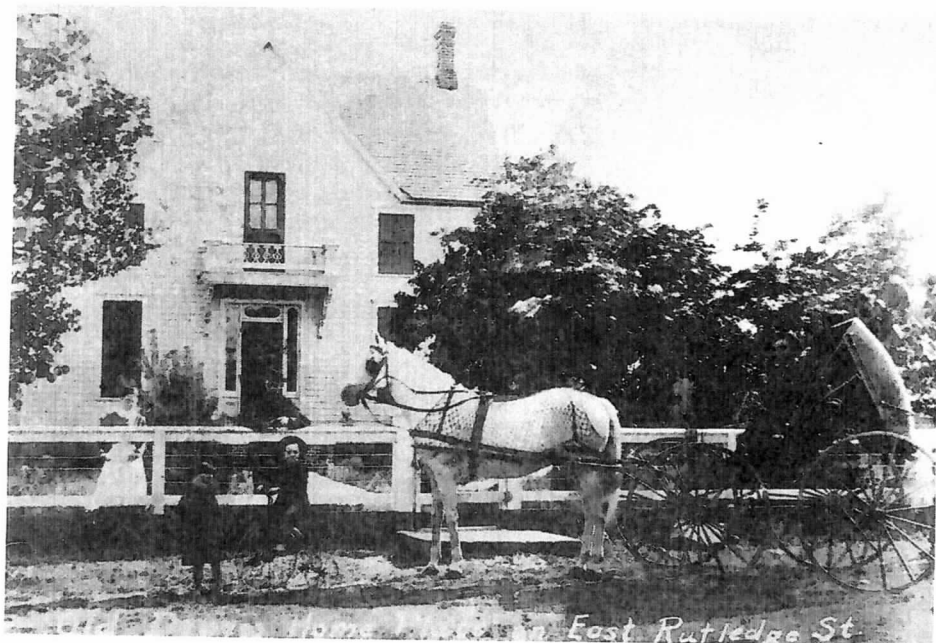
Gwendelin married William G. Amundsen.

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After serving two terms as county treasurer, J.W. Depew worked at several different occupations. He became cashier of the Woodson National Bank. The wreckage of this bank in the early ninties caused a financial loss to Mr. Depew that he never quite overcame. He was a talented bookkeeper and worked at that trade mostly. He served as cashier of the Yates Center National Bank for five years. He also served in the county clerks office for twelve years-two terms as clerk and the rest as deputy.

Mr. Depew was a Mason, and a member of Gilead Lodge No. 114. He served as Master for two terms and as secretary of the lodge for 30 years. In 1921 he was given a life membership, "as a token of appreciation of his long and faithful service to the lodge."





This is the home of the J.W. Depew family during the 1880's and 90's. Sitting in the buggy is J.W. Depew. The woman to the left is Mrs. Depew, and standing in front of the horse is William and Lon on the tricycle. The other man in picture is believed to be James G. Cox, the father of Mrs. Depew. Mr. Cox was a gunsmith and at one time had a gun shop to the west of where the bank now is.

This house that still stands at 308 E. Rutledge, was finished in spring and the Depews moved into it in May, 1881. Walter Depew was serving his first term as county treasurer when it was built. Mrs. Depew wrote; "We experienced the delight of moving into a new house, new in every detail. Big and roomy and in those days the nicest house in the village. In the third block east of the square, away down in the blackjacks it stood, the pioneer of the homes that helped push those blackjacks back from the uncertain grass grown road that today bears the name of East Rutledge Street and is graced with some of the city's finest homes."

It was from this house to the courthouse at northeast corner of the square that the first telephone wire was run. Again from Mrs. Depew writing; "Eves-dropping along the line was impossible. Many an evening we drew up our chairs near the sounder in our home and listened to the music of the band practicing in the courthouse."

The Depews sold this house to E.W. "Wilse" Naylor early in 1903.

## THE HUMBOLDT MISSION —

While this mission of the Evangelical Association was named for Humboldt, the nearest town, the missionary and all of the first members of the mission lived along Owl Creek in Woodson County. The newly appointed missionary to Kansas was R. Dubs. In the book, fifty years in the Kansas Conference of the Evangelical Association, describes his trip. This was early in the year of 1860.

"I traveled from Northern Illinois to Southern Kansas with horse and buggy through Southeastern Iowa and Missouri. At that time Missouri was a slave state, and in a condition of high excitement. The outbreak of the Civil War was at hand. I could relate many exciting adventures of my trip through Missouri. Not far from Leavenworth I crossed the Missouri River, from there I traveled through the Delaware Indian Reservation, then the Fox and Sac, and later, the Ottawa Reservation. From the chief of the latter tribe I received great courtesy and hospitality.

"I finally reached Humboldt, where we had only seven members; as far I could learn there were no others in this part of Southeastern Kansas. There were Rudolph Orth and family, with whom I was acquainted in Germany, Brother Ernst, a single man, and Brother Lintner and two sisters. Before the news reached them through the church papers that a Humboldt mission was formed, I was with them.

"My salary for that year amounted to \$125.00, besides traveling expenses, but no allowance was made for board or horse feed."

The people of this mission were some of the first settlers and pioneers along Owl Creek in Woodson County. Rudolph Orth, his wife Mary, who were former residents of Darmsdant, Germany. They had three small children at this time. John, Mary and Rudolph. The latter two were born in the log cabin of the Orths, in the southeast quarter of section 20-25-17. Not long after this Orth sold this homestead and purchased the northwest quarter of section 28-25-17. Here they built a large two story stone house, that is still the home of a great-grandson Glen Orth.

The Brother Ernst, a single man, was Adam Ernst. Later we find a record of his wife Anna Barbary.

The Brother Lintner was really Ernest Linder, and the sisters were twins, Louise and Christina, who were 19 at this particular time, Louise died just two years later. This only accounts for six of the seven mentioned. Ernest Linder had two brothers here at the time, Frank and August.

The Linders had been residents of Baden, Germany, coming to America in 1852. It was in the spring of 1857 that Ernest Linder and his older brother August came to Kansas.

Going from Stephenson Co., Illinois to St. Louis, Missouri, by rail, then to Kansas City by boat, then to Lawrence by stage. After a short stop here looking over the country, they started on foot to southeast Kansas. The first night was spent in Ohio City, near where Ottawa now is. The second night was spent in the home of an old bachelor west of the site of Garnett and the next day they proceeded



along the Indian trail to LeRoy, which was a small village. On the fourth morning they crossed the Neosho River, continuing on their way to Cherry Creek, and in that locality for several months they made their home with John Coleman. (The story of the John Coleman family is Vol. 3 No. 11, of IN THE BEGINNING, as one of the very first settlers in Owl Creek township.)

The Linder brothers began looking for good claims, in that locality. Ernest Linder located on the northeast quarter of section 33-25-17. Here he built a crude log cabin and as years went by he purchased other land and built more improvements to the north out of the flatland of Owl Creek.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Ernest Linder enlisted in Company F, Ninth Kansas Volunteer Cavalry, at Neosho Falls on November 20, 1861. He was promoted to corporal of that company. Shortly after the Civil War ended, Linder went back to Illinois where he was united in marriage to Julia Boyer, in April, 1865. They were the parents of five children, namely: Alice, who married August Stockebrand, Frank Ernest who married Katie Strauss; Laura -----, Louisa, wife of Nicholas Bennett, and Sarah who married ----- Ford.

The original homestead of Ernest Linder at present belongs to his great-grandson Clifford Bennett.

\* \* \* \* \*

Rev. Rudolph Dubs was 24 years old when he arrived along Owl Creek in 1860. That year was known as the great "Famine Year" in Kansas. Also known as the great drought of 1860. R. Dubs reported that the Neosho River at Humboldt contained water only in the deepest holes in the river bed.

During this great famine Dubs and other missionaries made appeals for help through their church papers. These appeals met with a ready response, and quite a lot of relief aid was sent to Rev. Dubs. He was over three hundred miles from a railroad; however he had no difficulty in getting the needed provisions here, since he would pay for the services in supplies. He wrote that he had a log cabin several miles from Humboldt that he used for a supply house. This log cabin of Rev. Dubs was not far from the banks of Owl Creek. He had staked out a claim and built his cabin and received a patent from the U.S. in June, 1861. R. Dubs also received considerable cash which he applied where it was needed and in his judgement do the most good.

There were many men who would work for most anything they could use. Dubs conceived the idea of building a church, with labor in exchange for provisions and clothing which he distributed.

The city council of Humboldt offered him lots to build a church on. Logs for lumber and stones for masonry were donated. The church was built that year (1860), in Humboldt. However, there was not a member living in the town. This was the first church-building in the Kansas Conference. During the Civil War the building was captured by the Rebels, and was held for a short time, when the Union troops dislodged them and made it their headquarters.

Rev. R. Dubs left the Humboldt Mission in 1861, and went to Leavenworth. He was replaced at Humboldt and along Owl Creek by another missionary, Rev. F. Berner. A letter was written by Rev. Berner on November 9, 1861, to the church paper which told of some of the trials that the people were going through.

"On October 14, I drove from Owl Creek to Humboldt to get my horse shod and have some repair work done on my buggy. Upon learning that I could not get my buggy before the next day, I left my baggage in town, borrowed a saddle and rode to the country to make some calls.

"Several hours after leaving town I and the family, with whom I was visiting heard a noise in the direction of town 2½ miles away. It was about 6:00 o'clock in the evening. Shortly after that we learned that the secessionists had invaded the town, 300 or 400 in number, over the resistance of the home guard, and were destroying the city. We could see the flames and smoke ascend, which reducing the town to ashes. All that I had except my horse, was in town. My first thought was to save my horse from the marauders by hiding him behind a shalk of corn, and then absenting myself some distance I fell upon my knees and prayed God for protection. The night was illuminated by the flames of the burning town. We could hear the roaring of the fire and the crashing of the buildings as they succumbed to the raging elements.

"At 10:30 p.m. the miscreants left the town after they had gratified their destructive lust and had pillaged all they could. They passed close by where I was concealed, and also where my horse was hid, but fortunately did not discover us, for I was praying to God for protection, and he wonderfully saved us all, including the family where I was staying.

"I returned to the destroyed town the next morning, but what a sight! Nearly the whole town lay in ashes and ruins, parents and children left homeless. One mother was carrying her little child in her arms with absolutely no clothing on its body. Everything was plundered and burned. My possessions were all gone except my horse. No buggy, no harness, no saddle, no money. Part of my clothes which were in my satchel were gone. Our church, and the English church, in town were spared. They wanted to burn the church, but for some reason did not do so."

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Rudolph Dubs had first received a patent from the U.S. for land along South Owl Creek, in the southwest quarter of section 30-25-17. He also received a patent for the northeast quarter of section 20-25-17. This was a part of what was known later as the Pribbernow farm, as was the first claim of Rudolph Orth. This later named quarter section of Dubs, he sold to the Adam Ernst mentioned for the sum of \$1.00. This was in April, 1862. Dubs at that time was living at Leavenworth.

While they were not a part of the Humboldt Mission, Rev. Dubs performed two marriages among the German people while living here. They were August Lauber and Louisa Stockebrand, in November 23, 1860, and Ernest Stockebrand and Mary Stang(en), on January 31, 1861.

## RIVER SCENE AT NEOSHO FALLS —

The picture shown on the cover was taken at Neosho Falls around 1900. Perhaps some of our readers remember or have heard about the old foot bridge. It was two planks wide layed between two rows of posts. It was across the river just below the old wooden dam. The mill across the river was known as the old Parsons Mill, but at the time of the picture was operated by a man named Basher.

The foot bridge was first built as an emergency and temperary crossing. The large bridge just above the dam where the old river bridge stood had broken down and fell into the river under a herd of large cattle.

A camp meeting was in progress at Riverside Park on the east side of the river, and with the collapse of the bridge it was necessary to make some kind of crossing for people on foot.

The picture shows a wagon of feed with two teams of horses pulling it. Perhaps four horses were needed to cross the river at that point. The two colts were probably more trouble than help. A woman and girl can be seen crossing the foot bridge. High water would dislodge the bridge ever so often, but it would be put back.

The foot bridge was used until the wagon bridge was rebuilt.



DRUG STORE OF SCHAAF & CO, TORONTO.

The man to the left side in the picture is believed to be J.B. Schaaf.

For many years this was a familiar sight along the south side of Main Street in Toronto. An article about this store around 1900 told that "The stock embraced a full line of pure and fresh drugs, chemicals and reliable proprietary remedies," besides toilet articles, perfume, cigars and tobacco, stationary, etc.

The owner and proprietor of this drug store was Jacob P. Schaaf, who was a native of ----- Illinois, but had lived in Kansas since the age of two years. He was reared and educated in Burlington, where he later was engaged in farming.

He came to Toronto and established the drug store in 1895. Thomas Finley a registered pharmacist, was with Schaaf when the store was started. Finley had came to Wilson County Kansas in 1868. He had learned the drug business in the store of F.M. Robertson at Coyville, Kansas.

While living at Burlington, J.P. Schaaf met and married Miss Emma Roberds. They lived on a farm near Burlington until coming to Toronto and starting the drug store. Thomas Finley who started out in the store with Schaaf was a brother-in-law — the two having married sisters.

Mr. and Mrs. Schaaf were the parents of six children, namely: Leonard, Jessie, Lester Thomas, Vivian, Lois and Dorothy. Lester T., who is better known as "Bill", is the city clerk at Toronto. He married Ruth Adkins; Vivian married Earl Black. They live in Toronto. Lois married ----- Buchheimer, Dorothy married Gilbert Starkebaum. They live in Yates Center. Jessie the oldest of the living children married ----- Studer.

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## BURT AND THE OLD TIMERS WHO GATHERED THERE —

(First published in the Woodson County Post in February 19, 1942)

In the compiling and writing of the History of Burt, the majority of the names, dates and facts we owe to the splendid memory of Forrest J. Randall, who helped us with this article at that time. Mr. Randall passed away in 1946.

Perhaps in the writing of this article it would be well to tell something about the first settler in what is known as the Burt vicinity. This honor as far as we can ascertain goes to Asa Whitney, a well known character of Liberty township in years past. Whitney first came to Woodson County in 1858 for a short time. In the spring of 1859, Asa Whitney, his wife and three children came to Turkey Creek in a covered wagon drawn by a yoke of oxen, and built a log cabin along the creek less than a quarter mile north and east of Burt. This would be eight miles north and two west of Yates Center.

Asa Whitney helped organize the first school in that locality in a small log building on the Whitney homestead. It was known as Liberty No. 1, also as the Whitney. Later it became the Byron, District No. 1. Mrs. Whitney was one of the first subscription teachers of this school. Mr. and Mrs. Whitney also helped organize the first church in that vicinity. It was of the Baptist denomination. That was in 1859, the year they came here.

Asa Whitney was born at Wallingsford, Vermont in 1821. After moving to different states, he went to Wisconsin. And in 1854, left that state and went to California by ox team and wagon. There he spent four years cutting and marketing wood in San Francisco Bay. In January, 1858, he left that state and traveled by steamer "around the Horn" and going to Chatauqua County, New York. Here he was married to Lydia Morian, in 1858. We believe that he had been married before as he had two sons, Omar, 16 and Cornith, age 13. Shortly after arriving in Woodson County a son Lovell was born. During the 1860's, the Whitneys' lost three small children, Morian, Dora and Howell. They were buried in the old Goings Cemetery, a mile north and a half east of the Whitney home-stand. Other children were Sarah Jane and William.

In later years Mr. and Mrs. Whitney spent much time in traveling and visiting.

When 18 years old Omar Whitney enlisted in Company F, Ninth Kansas Vol. Cavalry. After the Civil War was over Omar was married to Mary Ann Graves. They first lived along Turkey Creek just to the west of Burt, where Omar established a post office called Liberty that he kept in a log cabin for a couple of years. These Whitneys had a son E.P. Whitney who was the father of Francis Whitney of Yates Center.

In 1880, D.H. Burt came from Illinois and married the "Widow Burdette", who owned a farm along south of the creek across the road from Burt. We do not know just when Burdette came to that locality, but an ad in the Woodson County Post, 1873 at Neosho Falls, advertised over 3000 young fruit trees for sale by Burdette, so he evidently had a nursery started there along Turkey Creek. He died in the latter 1870's.

Soon after coming here D.H. Burt built a small building that he stocked and operated a small store, the first in this part of the county. On July 31, 1884, a post office was established in the store and called Burt with Daniel H. Burt as postmaster. Through the influence of Mr. Burt a Star mail route was established from Yates Center, via Coloma, Bryon, Burt, Finney and Keck. Mail was brought every other day. David Askren was of the early day settlers along Turkey Creek was one of the first Star carriers.

## MANY CHANGES MADE -

During the next few years the mile of road running north and south past the Burt store and principally the south half was the scene of a great many changes in storekeepers, postmasters, blacksmiths and doctors.

Dr. Selleck was the first M.D. to settle in the Burt community and a little later a Mr. Bunton, a blacksmith located there. In 1884 Dr. Jones came and built the house across the road from where the Burt store stood for many years. The same year John Meyers built a blacksmith shop over a quarter mile south of the creek.

In 1887 Dr. Jones left and Dr. John Hoke came and stayed for four or five years. Another man known as both Doc Day and Rev. Day. Day was a Methodist minister living at Pleasant View along about this time. He had been a doctor before entering the ministry and administered to the sick to some extent.

In Volume 3, No. 12, of IN THE BEGINNING, we told about Mrs. C.L. "Grandma" Randall. We will not repeat only to say that for over 30 years Grandma Randall, helped bring many babies into the world in the Burt vicinity.

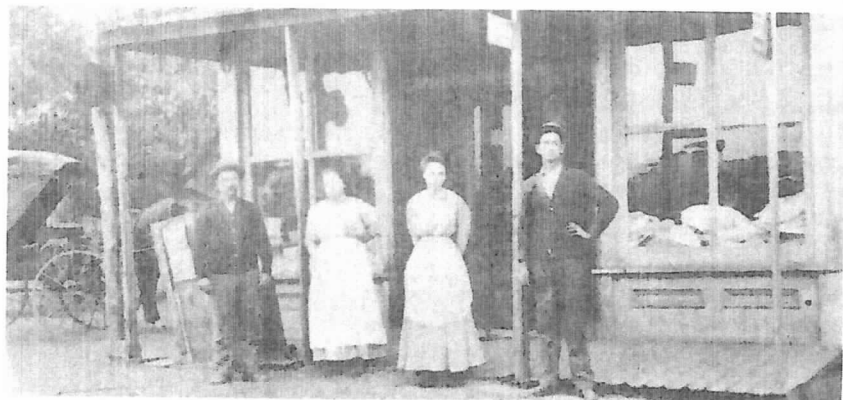
D.H. Burt remained in the general store business until 1885 when he sold his store and rented his farm to Rev. E.J. Troyer, Evangelical minister who also preached at Finney M.E. Church and at the Askren schoolhouse, where the Germans of the surrounding area were holding their church services until the Turkey Creek church was built. Before this Rev. Troyer was a circuit rider, going from one charge to another. Rev. Troyer was the grandfather of Mrs. Pearl Opperman of Yates Center.

In the spring of 1888, E.J. Troyer traded his store to Joseph Gordon for 40 acres of land that was across the road from the Finney school. That would be seven miles north and three west of Yates Center. The same years John Meyers sold his blacksmith shop to Forrest Randall.

In the fall of 1889 Joseph Gordon sold the store to a Mr. Helmick, who lived on the corner a half mile south of the store known then as the Peirce farm, now owned by Art Edwards. A little later D.H. Burt again purchased the store from Helmick.

The spring of 1891 Forrest Randall, moved his blacksmith shop to Vernon. When Randall purchased this shop from John Meyers two years before there had been an agreement between them that Meyers would not start another shop in that vicinity as long as Randall kept his shop there. So when Randall moved his shop to Vernon John Meyers started a blacksmith shop on his farm along Turkey Creek a quarter mile east of the Finney School, where the big bend in the road is just east of the bridge. John Meyers had originally come from north-eastern Indiana and was the indirect cause of the Harding brothers. George and Curt coming to Woodson County.

About 1894 D.H. Burt again sold the store. This time to James F. Whitaker and his farm to Howard Brown. It was sometime before this transaction that the Burt store was robbed, the only incident of that kind that we learned of.



Well known people at the old Burt Store. Left to right: Forrest Randall, his wife India, Mabel Old and her husband Noah Old. Mrs. Randall and Mrs. Old were sisters.



Up until this time the Burt store had been located a quarter mile south of the store as most of us remember it not far from the bank of Turkey Creek. James F. Whittaker built a store building and house and moved it to the present location of Burt. The old store building was torn down by Roy Stewart for \$1.00.

In the meantime Forrest Randall had sold out at Vernon and made the Cheyenne Run into Oklahoma. He also made later the run into the Cherokee Strip. In 1896 Randall came back from Oklahoma and worked for one year blacksmithing for J.F. Whittaker and walked 1½ miles each way to his work. In the spring of 1897 he built and started a blacksmith shop of his own just back of where the Burt store building stands and built a house just to the north of where the store stood.

In the spring of 1899 Henry Old bought a half interest in the Randall blacksmith shop and they put in a small stock of hardware consisting of nails, bolts, stove pipe, harness and other hardware goods. Being successful in their shop they decided to expand their business and in January 1900 they borrowed \$300.00 from a local man with interest at 10 per cent. With \$150 a store building was built in front of the blacksmith shop. This was the original store building that still stands at Burt. With the other \$150, they put in a small stock of groceries on the north side of the building, kept the hardware and a top buggy on the south side to fill up the space.

Thus in 1900, Burt was a thriving community with two stores side by side, a postoffice, and a blacksmith shop. This same spring J.F. Whittaker started a huckster wagon ran by Beal Manifold. Another huckster wagon from Vernon run by a man named Harris, and one from LeRoy by a Mr. Lineback also came through here.

**HUCKSTER WAGONS** — A wagon borrowed from Curt B. Harding was fixed into a huckster wagon with a cover made of canvas and buggy top material. Shelves were made along the sides. A measure was fastened on the door of the wagon to measure calico and dress material on. To hold their trade Randall and Old fixed up the above wagon and started their own huckster wagon. The wagon was pulled by a team of ponies. One of the ponies was named Enid as it was the first horse colt born in Enid, Oklahoma, shortly after the Randall's and Gordon's had made the "run" into Oklahoma. Roy Stewart, who was just a young man at that time ran the Huckster wagon.

Off times when Roy would leave Burt his wagon would have more goods and groceries in it than was left on the shelves in the store. Roy would make a two day trip, going west by way of Keck (where the Kimbell Ranch is). He would stay all night at the James Morgan home just to the west of the Askren Cemetery. The next day he would go through the German-Russian settlement at Nikkeltown. The next trip in the same week would take him along Duck Creek and over in the edge of Coffey County. This huckster wagon would invoice about \$40.00 a week.

Although the huckster wagons at Burt did not last long, there was a great deal of action and excitement while they did last. There was usually a race between the two hucksters and their wagons every morning as they left Burt to see which could get away first. There were often times a horse race to the first house. For a while there seemed to be too many of the huckster wagons in this vicinity and one by one they dropped out till Roy Stewart had the field to himself. After about ten months this wagon was discontinued.

The Burt store and stock in 1901 was valued at \$2000 and the annual sales around \$10,000. The goods in the store were invoiced at \$3,700 sometimes after this. In those days eggs sold as low as three cents a dozen in the summer and ten cents in the winter. Heavy hens, 10 cents a pound; butter eight cents a pound; coffee, ten cents; sugar five cents; bacon 8 to 10 cents; lard, ten cents. Potatoes and apples, 50 cents a bushel; first grade flour, 75 cents a sack; calico five cents and muslin 8 to 10 cents a yard. Hose, three pairs for 25 cents. And the very best hose (all black) 25 cents. About this time a law was passed that eggs must be candled and that was the beginning of better prices for eggs.

Randall and Old kept adding to their stock until they had a general store, handling almost everything the farmers needed. One of the things sold then is almost a forgotten article now. That was the top buggy, selling from \$40.00 to \$100.00. The store goods were hauled from Yates Center and Vernon with a team of ponies. In the winter time Henry Old taught the Byron, Dist. No. 1 school and worked in the store in the summer.

In the fall of 1900 the blacksmith shop was sold to John Klingenberg who built a house and shop on the east side of the road on the north side of Turkey Creek.

In 1903, Henry Old bought out the Whittaker store and the same year Forrest Randall was appointed as postmaster of Burt and remained the postmaster until the Rural Free Delivery was established in 1904.

The writer of this article who is the editor of this magazine was born about a mile north of Burt, well, some sixty odd years ago and his first recollection of the Burt store is naturally, candy. Not the fancy wrapped candy bars found in stores today, but some of that old-fashioned sugar candy. After the Harding's moved to Kansas City in 1907, Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Randall would come to the city on a buying trip and visit us and they would always bring along some of that candy. Although their candy originally came from Kansas City it always tasted better to us when they would bring it from Burt.

**MANY MORE CHANGES** — In 1906, Forrest Randall sold his half interest in the store to Joseph Gordon and in 1908 came back and bought Henry Old's interest in the store. A.J. Trowbridge was the next blacksmith staying from 1908 until 1910. Frank Reed and Dwight Crawford were also blacksmiths at Burt. In 1914, Forrest again worked at the blacksmith trade.

In 1906 a telephone line was run from Yates Center through the Burt neighborhood and the first telephones were installed.

This was taken from the book, "Encyclopedia of Kansas History," published in 1912; "Burt — a little inland village in Woodson County is on Turkey Creek, in northern part of the county, 8 miles northwest of Yates Center, the county seat, whence it receives its mail by rural route. Moody, about 7 miles northeast, is the nearest railroad station and shipping point. The population in 1910 was 53.

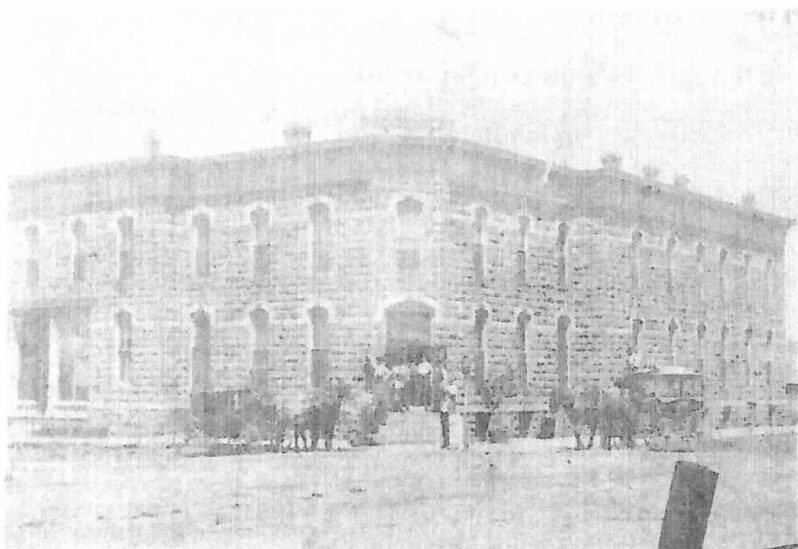
About 1915 quite a few people in this part of the county began to get automobiles and was the beginning of the decline of the country blacksmith shop.

The Burt store changed hands several times in the next few years, but belonging mostly to Henry, Noah and Chester Old. In 1919 Noah and Chester Old sold the store to Mr. and Mrs. O.G. Mulsow who ran it until 1928. During the 1920's while the Mulsows ran the store was the only time that a car agency was at Burt. O.G. Mulsow sold several Model T Ford's ranging from \$450 without a starter to \$550 all equipped. During 1922 the annual sales at Burt amounted to around \$13,000. There was quite an oil boom north and west of Burt at that time.

In 1928, Noah Old bought the store from O.G. Mulsow and ran it till 1939 when he sold it to Elmer Crumrine. The Crumrines ran the Burt store for several years. During this time the sale of gasoline was one of the main items.

The Crumrines sold the store to the Leonard Scott family who after a short time sold the store to Mac and Ella McClure. The McClures moved to Oregon after selling the store back to Mr. and Mrs. O.G. Mulsow.

### The Woodson Hotel



While not the first hotel in Yates Center, the Woodson Hotel is the only one that has survived the changing times and has remained a landmark on the northwest corner of the square.

Around the first of the year 1887 plans were drawn up for a hotel. Yates Center had three hotels, the Commercial, Western House and the Central House.

The first "Inn" or eating house or boarding house was a small house moved to the new town of Yates Center from Kalida. The house was occupied by Henry Wille and was on the lot where the Woodson Hotel was later built.

Before the railroad came through town and the block where the hotel is, the entire block was an orchid.

The following article appeared in the Yates Center News of February 25, 1887; "The contract for the building the new hotel was awarded to J.T. Black of Ottawa at \$10,500. The whole to be completed by October next. Mr. Black is the architect who drew up the plans. Dr. Turner has secured the contract for furnishing the stone Lord Brothers will do the masonry work and Jake Taylor has the job for breaking and dressing the stone." (The stone was all quarried in one of the quarries north of town.)

The October 7, 1887 issue of the News. "The News takes pleasure in stating that the Hotel Woodson has been leased by Thos. L. Reid of Neosho Falls and will open to the public about the first of November. Mr. Reid has been managing the Neosho Falls Hotel. The Hotel Woodson is one of the finest buildings in this section of the state."

The hotel was opened for reception on November 7, 1887, but not much was printed about that.

The first ad and picture of the hotel first appeared in the News of November 25, 1887. Up until around the turn of the century there was no electricity, gas, telephone or running water in the hotel.

In a letter from Edwin Guy Reid of St. Louis, whose father ran the hotel, he tells that; "In the winter you kept busy carrying in coal for 12 stoves and filling the coal box in the kitchen, taking the stoves down in the spring, and cleaning and polishing them in the fall. There was a 150 gallon hot water tank in the kitchen (the only hot water tank in the hotel.) Also a tank in the basement laundry and a washroom next to the office. Then in the morning you would have to remove all of the sheets, pillow cases and dirty towels. Empty all the slop jars and carry all the waste water down back of the hotel and dump it on the ground.

The toilets were outside and there was a stove in it that had to be kept going. Then you had to fill all of the water pitchers in the 21 rooms, and clean all of the lamp chimneys and fill all the lamps with coal oil. The lamps on the writing desks and the big lamps in the office and dining room and kitchen had to be cleaned and filled with coal oil. Also the ones in the basement.

The swill and garbage had to be taken out and burned. Part of the time a wagon with a couple of barrels in it was back of the hotel where the dishwater and garbage were put in and hauled to a hog pen north of town."

About 1901 natural gas was pumped into town and telephones were installed about the same time. It was around 1906 when the Opperman brothers, Charles and Fred put in a light plant and the hotel was about the first to wire for it.

Many salesmen and or "drummers" of all sorts visited the hotel and displayed their wares on tables in the basement. Sometimes a medicine show or a small circus would come to town and put up at the hotel. Mr. Reid writes: "I remember Buffalo Bill coming to town with his medicine show. Three or four women and musicians were with the show."

A couple of cabs from the livery stable were rented, and decorated with banners and plumes decorated the horses, as they would parade around town advertising the show.

They would throw parties and fill up with booze and get pretty noisy. One time they were in the dining room and were pinching grapes and squirting them at each other. A waitress, Daisy Obanion, slipped on one of these grapes and dropped a tray full of dishes. When Thomas Reid came in to see what the commotion was about, he asked Buffalo Bill to cut it out and he deliberately squirted Dad in the eye with a grape and the old man (Dad) grabbed him by the hair and yanked him out of the chair and believe me you never saw such a fight. They wrecked the dining room office and my mother ran out in front of the hotel with an old dinner bell and started ringing it. Tom Cotter and Fred Long with several others finally got them under control. Show people had a hard time putting up at the hotel after that."

While Thomas Reid was the first operator of the Hotel Woodson, he did not run it very long until he sold out, and later came back to operate it again. This he did a couple of times along with the livery stable that he operated.

Thomas L. Reid was born in Nova Scotia. As a youngster he came to the New England states of the U.S., where he worked for a while and then returned to Nova Scotia, after five years of working at different jobs. In 1873 he was married to Bessie Willets. At this time Reid was chief clerk in a large hotel in Massachusetts. This was also the year of the great money panic and was the cause of Reid losing out at the hotel.

So in 1875, Thomas Reid came west and landed at Neosho Falls, where sometime later he became operator of the Falls House as told in the last issue of IN THE BEGINNING.

The children of Thomas L. and Bessie Reid were: Edith, Maude, Walter, Harry, Edwin Guy and Mary.

After serving as marshall of Neosho Falls four years and deputy sheriff under Abe Smith, Sheriff of Woodson County, Reid decided to run for sheriff. In 1891 he was elected to that office and in 1893, was re-elected as sheriff. He was also President of the Kansas Sheriff's Association. Here he became acquainted with Bill Tilghman, a well-known law officer of Abilene and Dodge City. On one occasion, Reid went to Dodge City after a man name Morgan. Tilghman told Reid that the horse thief would kill him on sight, but Reid brought him back to Yates Center chained to a seat in the train.

Besides operating the hotel and being sheriff, Reid had the livery stable. To the livery stable was added a bus line to the depots. A dray wagon and transfer was added. There were two regular hands besides cab and bus drivers. About 30 horses were kept besides a couple of stallions. Besides the care of these horses

there was the buggies, cabs and wagons to keep repaired. Some of the cab and bus drivers were: Rafe Faler, Ernest Gualt, George Stewart, Bill Carroll, George Spriggs, Bill Obanion, Hoppy Scranton, Joe Adams and others.

The Verdigris Valley, Independence and Western Depot, (later the Missouri Pacific) was at the west end of Rutledge Street and the Santa Fe depot at the end of Main Street, making them several blocks from the hotel. The Reid cabs would meet these trains to bring passengers, especially the salesmen or drummers. Some of these drummers would have several trunks of samples that would be hauled to the sample tables in the basement of the hotel.

Close to the livery stable was a good well. A windmill was erected, along with a 2500 gallon tank that not only supplied water for the livery stable but was piped across the street to the hotel. Later one of the first gasoline engine water pumps in town was installed.

To quote again from E.G. Reid about the chores around the hotel when he was a boy; "When the water was pumped from the livery stable it was a great improvement. Before that the water was pumped from a well back of the hotel. All of the rooms had wash bowls and pitchers that had to be kept full, a 30 gallon tank in the wash room, a 150 gallon hot water in the kitchen, a 200 gallon tank in the basement laundry, besides a water cooler in the office. Ten or 12 cuspidors that had to be emptied and cleaned. The hot water tank in the kitchen had to be filled by climbing a ladder.

Artificial ice was unknown. Ice was put up in the winter time with chunks of ice being stored in sawdust and straw.

The Thomas Reid family sold out here and moved to other places.

The Woodson Hotel changed hands several times, and at the present time is not being used as a hotel. Not mentioned before, the hotel at one time boasted of a ballroom, where invitation dances were held. The large dining hall is still being used for dinner meetings of various organizations. A doughnut shop and a beauty shop are operating in the old hotel building.

**T. L. REID**



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## THE McCORD SHEEP RANCH —

Ezra and Seeley McCord came to Woodson County, from Blue Island, New York. We do not know just when they came here, but it was in December, 1878, that they purchased three sections from the M.K.T. Railroad. Sections 19-20-21 in township 14, range 21. On a high hill on the west side of section 21, about twelve miles northwest of Yates Center, the McCords built a large two-story frame house. We were told by an old timer in that vicinity that when this house was first built and with the sun shining on the new boards that it could be seen as one would come up out of the Neosho Valley where the old wagon trail crossed the Neosho River to the southwest of LeRoy.

As McCord started making this a sheep ranch, he began bringing hundreds of sheep to the headquarters. The west half of section 21 and the south half of section 20 were fenced. A group of the German-Russian men from around Nikeltown were hired to build a rock fence. Most of these rocks were picked up on the prairie around over the ranch. It took a lot of rocks to build the four and a half miles of rock fence. The men received \$1.50 a rod for the building of this fence. The half mile on the west side was built of walnut boards.

The McCord Sheep Ranch was extended to around four thousand acres.

The sheep ranch was not destined to last very long as around 1882-85 the ranch was divided up and sold to different people. The half section across the road to the west of the ranch house was sold to Alfred Keck who in a short time started the town of Keck. The south west quarter of section was sold to Peden. This was known for many years later as the Henry Burns farm. On this farm was a large spring and where one of the main sheep corals was located.

Around 1888, the John Simpson family came from LaCyne, Kansas, and moved into what had been the McCord Sheep Ranch. Simpson was one of the early cattlemen on what we now call the Kimbell Ranch. He had two sons, Harry and Ed Simpson who grew up in the Keck vicinity.

There were several different families lived on this place during the next years, before it became the Kimbell Brothers Ranch, and now the Kimbell Ranch.

The several miles of stone fence eventually all fell down and the most of it was hauled off and used on pond dams to stop erosion.

The large two story house mentioned above burned to the ground around ten years ago.

We will tell more about the ranch at this location later.

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**PATRONS OF THE WOODSON COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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State Exchange Bank	Blackjack Cattle Co.
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